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Part 2: Reflection — Walking Two Journeys at Once

(Personal reflections to accompany your practical care)

A medical or mental health diagnosis is more than test results and treatment plans. It's also a human experience — one that can stir fear, hope, uncertainty, and resilience.

My hope is that the practical tools in this packet help you have clearer, more effective conversations with your healthcare team. But there's another journey happening alongside: the inner work of staying grounded, honest, and open to truth even in difficulty.

These reflections come from my own winding path — distillations from experiences I'm still learning from. The first lesson I learned is that I am a broken man with logs in my eyes. Any good these words might offer comes not from the words themselves, but from how you might adapt and use them in your own life.

In *Through Fire and Thorns*, the themes of starting where you are, untangling expectations, and finding healing in community are not so different from what a patient faces when navigating care.

- In both, progress is rarely a straight line.
- In both, clarity often comes step by step.
- In both, you bring your whole self — body, mind, and spirit — to the process.

You can use the medical worksheets for your next appointment and, separately, use the questions below to explore what's happening in your inner life. They are not meant to influence your medical decisions — just to give you space to see the larger meaning in the path you're walking.

Questions for Reflection

1. Where am I “starting where I am” right now — in my health, my relationships, my inner life?

2. What expectations from others (or from myself) might I need to untangle to be more at peace?

3. How am I finding clarity in steps, rather than all at once?

4. In what ways am I resisting pressures to “package” or perform my experience for others?

5. Who in my life can hear my story without trying to fix it — and how can I make space for them?

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